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SUBJECT: SECURITY COUNCIL DISCUSSES LEBANON; SEVERAL  
MEMBERS CALL FOR ACTION BEFORE NAMBIAR MISSION CONCLUDES

REF: BEIRUT 2403

Classified By: Ambassador John R. Bolton, per 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary. During closed consultations on July 17, the UN Security Council heard briefings from DPA U/SYG Gambari and DPKO A/SYG Lute on the situation in Lebanon and discussed possible reaction from the Council. Gambari and Lute condemned Hizballah attacks on Israel, expressed concerns about the humanitarian consequences of Israel's response, and called for an immediate end to hostilities. Gambari cited SYG Annan's call for "time and space for diplomacy" and proposal for Council consideration of a "package of actions," including a stabilization force. He reported SYG Special Adviser Nambiar and his team had held "promising" talks in Cairo and Beirut and would travel next to Israel and the West Bank/Gaza. He said there was "an intention" to go to Syria, and that the team could arrive in New York possibly by the end of the week. Cataloguing threats to UNIFIL personnel from IDF military action, Lute also expressed concern that PM Olmert's assurances to SYG Annan of freedom of movement for UNIFIL had not yet been fulfilled.

12. (C) Following briefings by the Secretariat, several Council members proposed that the French Ambassador (as President of the UNSC) deliver a press statement noting the morning's consultations, declaring the UNSC's intent to remain engaged on the situation in Lebanon, and urging restraint and the importance of avoiding civilian casualties. They noted that the G-8 and the Arab League had issued statements calling on the Council to act. After Ambassador Bolton argued strongly that the Council should wait for Nambiar to return before pronouncing on the conflict, the French Ambassador agreed to brief the press solely in his personal capacity and not on behalf of the UNSC. Several Council members expressed interest in Council action after a Nambiar briefing, possibly as early as this Friday. End Summary.

Secretariat Urges Restraint

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and Promotes Cease-Fire

13. (C) During their briefings to the Council, Department of Political Affairs Under Secretary-General (U/SYG) Gambari and Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) Assistant Secretary-General (A/SYG) Lute both condemned Hizballah

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attacks on Israel, expressed concerns about the impact on civilians and civilian targets of Israel's response, and called for an immediate end to hostilities. Warning of a devastating impact on Lebanon and the broader region if the

situation continues to escalate, Gambari demanded that Hizballah stop its "indiscriminate" attacks on Israeli population centers. Noting that civilians are bearing the brunt of the conflict, he also argued that Israeli targeting of Lebanon's civilian infrastructure must end, and asserted there is no viable military solution to the conflict. Gambari expressed deep concerns that Israeli calls to civilians in south Lebanon to leave their homes were breaches of international law. He announced that the UN would dispatch a four-person team from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to help manage humanitarian relief efforts.

¶4. (C) Turning to SYG Special Adviser Nambiar's mission to the Middle East, Gambari told the Council that the UN delegation held "promising" talks with Egyptian officials and Arab League FMs in Cairo as well as GOL PM Siniora and Speaker of the Parliament Berri in Beirut. Nambiar and his team would travel on to Israel to raise with the GOI the ideas they discussed with Siniora. If necessary, they would travel on to the Palestinian territories and possibly return to Beirut to continue consultations with the GOL. In response to a question by Ambassador Bolton, Gambari confirmed that the team intends to visit Damascus. He expressed hope that the Nambiar team would return to New York by the end of the week -- at which point they would brief the Council on their mission. In appealing to the UNSC to play its role in defusing the crisis, Gambari noted statements by the Arab League and the G-8 -- as well as PM Siniora's address on July 15 -- to emphasize the importance of an immediate cease-fire, the release of the Israeli "abductees," and efforts to address the humanitarian situation. He also referred to SYG Annan's suggestion that the Council consider a package of measures, including a plan to ensure implementation of UNSCRs 1559 and 1680 and a new UN "stabilization force."

¶5. (C) Describing the status of UNIFIL personnel, A/SYG Lute

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expressed concern that assurances from Israeli PM Olmert to SYG Annan about freedom of movement for UNIFIL personnel had not yet been fulfilled, resulting in limitations on UNIFIL operations. She reported 17 instances of IDF fire close to UNIFIL positions on July 16 alone. UN position 833 (near Houleh) had been hit by two IDF tank rounds, she said, which had resulted in injury to one soldier assigned to UNIFIL; UN position 644 (near al-Tirri) had also suffered a direct hit with no casualties. Lute also said UNIFIL forces had been put in danger when the IDF shelled UNIFIL convoys escorting civilians leaving the Lebanese village of Marwahin. IDF shelling of the city of Tyre, where UNIFIL personnel are housed, had damaged an apartment building near UN housing but had caused no injuries. (Note: The Israeli Mission to the UN is compiling a response to DPKO's briefing for USUN use in future consultations. End Note.) UNIFIL had asked the IDF for an eight-hour window July 17 to re-supply its positions, which the IDF supported. She said the UN was planning sea and land evacuations (to the north) of UN staff and dependents out of Lebanon. In addition to describing the status of UN forces, Lute also noted that UNIFIL had today observed three IDF tanks crossing the Blue Line at Ras Naqoura as well as IDF troops erecting concrete blocks at Ghajjar inside south Lebanon.

Several Delegates Call for UNSC Action  
Before Nambiar Mission Concludes  
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¶6. (C) After briefings by the Secretariat, the Danish delegation expressed support for a UNSC press statement noting the day's briefings and declaring the Council's intent to remain engaged on the situation in Lebanon. Other delegations, however, including the French, Argentines, Greeks, Chinese, Tanzanians, and Ghanians, proposed a more detailed statement in which the Council would also urge

restraint and reiterate the importance of avoiding civilian casualties. While acknowledging differences of opinion about calls for a cease-fire, the Qatari delegation argued that the Council should support a truce to allow diplomatic efforts to succeed. Ambassador Bolton argued strongly that the Council should not cherry-pick substantive elements from the two-page G-8 statement and should wait for the Nambiar mission to return to pronounce on the issue. After a long discussion, the French Ambassador agreed that he would brief the press in his personal capacity on the morning's consultations and would not make a statement on behalf of the entire Council.

¶7. (C) The French Ambassador announced he would hold bilateral discussions with Council members to determine how the UNSC should respond to briefings by Nambiar and his team. He suggested preliminarily that the Council should support the GOL, seek a lasting resolution of the conflict through the full implementation of UNSCRs 1559 and 1680, and arrange an immediate cease-fire. The UK DPR, recounting PM Blair's comments during a joint press conference with SYG Annan about a possible "international security presence" to help prevent attacks by Hizballah on Israel, said the UK was ready to work on the details of such a force as well as a plan to implement outstanding UNSCRs. She suggested the Council agree on these points by the time the Nambiar mission returns to New York. China and Russia argued that the Council need not wait until Nambiar returns to take action and both supported an immediate cease-fire. Japan said it was flexible on the question of UNSC action before Nambiar's return and expressed its support for the principles contained in the G-8 declaration. Qatar reiterated the importance of a cease-fire and insisted that Israel could not take it upon itself to implement UNSCR

¶1559.  
BOLTON